

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SAJ-01

SCCT-01 /071 W

----- 123791

R 261619Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7839

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

UNCLAS DUBLIN 0805

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EI

SUBJECT: IRA DEMONSTRATION IN DUBLIN

1. SUPPORTERS OF THE PROVISIONAL WING OF THE IRA STAGED A LARGE DEMONSTRATION IN DUBLIN ON SUNDAY, APRIL 25, COMMEMORATING THE 1916 EASTER UPRISING. THE DEMONSTRATION CONSISTED OF A PARADE THROUGH THE CENTER PART OF DUBLIN, WITH A RALLY AND SPEECHES AT THE GENERAL POST OFFICE ON O'CONNELL STREET. ESTIMATES OF THE CROWD VARY CONSIDERABLY BUT OUR BEST ESTIMATE IS THAT APPROXIMATELY 6,000 PROVO SUPPORTERS AND PERHAPS 4,000 SUNDAY AFTERNOON CASUAL SPECTATORS WERE THERE.

2. THIS DEMONSTRATION HAD BEEN BANNED BY THE GOVERNMENT UNDER SPECIAL PROVISIONS OF THE OFFENSES AGAINST THE STATE ACT, BUT TRUE TO ITS WORD THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT ACTUALLY INTERFERE WITH ANY OF THE EVENTS. LARGE NUMBERS OF POLICE AND SOLDIERS WERE ON HAND AND THERE WERE A FEW SHOVING INCIDENTS BUT IN GENERAL THE DEMONSTRATION WAS ORDERLY. EVERYONE WITH WHOM WE HAVE TALKED COUNTS THIS AS A PUBLIC RELATIONS PLUS FOR THE PROVISIONALS AND A SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSING INCIDENT FOR THE GOI. MOST CONCLUDE THAT THE GOVERNMENT BAN ITSELF GAVE MORE PUBLICITY FOR THE EVENT THAT IT WOULD NORMALLY HAVE ACHIEVED, AND SO FAR THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE NOTHING TO IMPLEMENT ITS BAN. THERE ARE NO ARRESTS. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME OF THE LEADERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO

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MADE SPEECHES, MAY BE ARRESTED.

3. THE STAR OF THE SHOW WAS DAITHI O CONAILL, PROMINENT IRA FIGURE, WHO WAS RECENTLY RELEASED FROM PRISON; ALSO PROMINENT AND MAKING SPEECHES WERE PROVO SINN FEIN LEADER RUAIGI O BRADAIGH, MAIRE DRUMM FROM BELFAST, AND JOE CAHILL. PERHAPS THE MOST PUBLICIZED PARTICIPANT WAS A MEMBER OF THE IRISH PARLIAMENT, LABOR DEPUTY DR. DAVID THORNLEY. HE STATED PUBLICLY THAT HE WAS ATTENDING BECAUSE HE DID NOT APPROVE OF THE BAN ON THE GROUNDS OF CIVIL LIBERTIES AND NOT BECAUSE HE SUPPORTED ANY ORGANIZATION, BUT HE HAS CLEARLY BROKEN THE LAW AND NOW THE GOVERNMENT WHICH IS A LABOR/FINE GAEAL COALITION, MUST DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH HIM. WHETHER HE WILL MERELY BE CENSURED IN THE DAIL OR PERHAPS EVEN ARRESTED AND CHARGED IS STILL A MATTER FOR INTERESTING SPECULATION.

4. COMMENT: THIS EVENT ATTRACTED A LARGER CROWD THAN ANYONE EXPECTED. HOWEVER, OUR BEST SOURCES INDICATED THAT FOUR/FIFTHS OF THE SUPPORTERS AND EVERYONE OF THE 28 MARCHING BANDS PRESENT WERE FROM NORTHERN IRELAND, NOT FROM THE PUBLIC. HOWEVER WE ACCOUNT FOR THE NUMBERS, THE GOI HAS STUMBLERD A BIT IN ITS HANDLING OF THIS AFFAIR AND RECRIMINATIONS ARE NOW MUCH IN THE AIR. WE STILL DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE EVENT INDICATES ANY SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC SUPPORT

FOR THE PROVISIONAL IRA AND ITS TACTICS. CURLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DUBLIN00805
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760158-0823
From: DUBLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760423/aaaaatga.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchant0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 AUG 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 AUG 2004 by cookms>; APPROVED <15 DEC 2004 by buchant0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IRA DEMONSTRATION IN DUBLIN
TAGS: PINT, EI, IRA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006